Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph spanning line 21 of page 7 through line 9 of page 8 as follows:

The IFN-β variants encompassed herein include muteins of the mature native IFN-β sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:1 (see, for example, U.S. Patent No. 5,814,485, herein incorporated by reference), wherein one or more cysteine residues that are not essential to biological activity have been deliberately deleted or replaced with other amino acids to eliminate sites for either intermolecular crosslinking or incorrect intramolecular disulfide bond formation. IFN-β variants of this type include those containing a glycine, valine, alanine, leucine, isoleucine, tyrosine, phenylalanine, histidine, tryptophan, serine, threonine, or methionine substituted for the cysteine found at amino acid 17 of the mature native amino acid sequence. Serine and threonine are the more preferred replacements because of their chemical analogy to cysteine. Serine substitutions are most preferred. See, for example, the IFN-β variant where the cysteine found at amino acid 17 of the mature native sequence is replaced with serine (SEQ ID NO:2; U.S. Patent No. 5,814,485). Cysteine 17 may also be deleted using methods known in the art (see, for example, U.S. Patent No. 4,588,584, herein incorporated by reference), resulting in a mature IFN-β mutein that is one amino acid shorter than the mature native IFN-β. See also, as examples, U.S. Patent Nos. 4,530,787; 4,572,798; and 4,588,585. Thus, IFN-β variants with one or more mutations that improve, for example, their pharmaceutical utility are also encompassed by the present invention.